From the Institute of the North:

Majorities in Arctic Nations Favour Co-operation with Russia Despite Ukraine; The Arctic Council is Largely Unknown

By Sara French and Nils Andreassen

Differing levels of trust, geopolitical tension, and a general lack of public awareness of Arctic issues provide the backdrop for this week's Arctic Council meeting of high level representatives of the eight Arctic states in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

A survey of 10,000 respondents in countries with Arctic territory reveals major differences of opinion on issues ranging from Arctic co-operation with Russia, to the threat of military conflict north of the 60th parallel, to whether the Northwest Passage is a Canadian or international waterway.

It also shows that the Arctic Council, a forum for the eight nations to manage mutual Arctic concerns and interests, is only vaguely known, if at all, among citizens in the countries surveyed. Governments, on the other hand – including non-Arctic states – and other stakeholders, are according the Council increasing political priority given the North's vast natural resources, centrality to global climate change, and potential as a far shorter route for shipping goods between the North Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Commissioned by the Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program and the Institute of the North in Alaska, and conducted by EKOS Research Associates, the polling uses many of the same questions used in our 2010 survey, and thus reveals how public opinion has changed over the last five years.

Watch highlights of the results here.

Access an overview of polling results here.

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